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25X1A

[] 2604-66

Copy 1
23 June 1966

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR THE DD/S&T

SUBJECT: Review of Status on TACKLE Aircraft Loss 21 June 1966

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1. TACKLE U-2 number 384 departed [] 21/0200Z on a routine training mission. Primary purpose of the flight was a long range (5.5 hour) high altitude training mission to validate fuel consumption data.

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2. Pilot of the aircraft was []. Prior to this flight he had logged a total of 3,208 hours flying time, of which 230 hours were in the U-2. He had completed six operational over-flight missions in the U-2. A full complement of systems, including new lightweight B and tracker cameras, was aboard.

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3. At 0638Z [] gave the first indication of trouble. The first [] chirp revealed DC and AC generators out, RPM below 75 per cent and autopilot disengaged. The last [] chirp occurred sixteen seconds after report of initial failure and indicated cockpit pressurization above 35,000 feet. A pressure sensitive switch should have disabled the SSB transmitter and terminated [] transmissions at that time.

4. Any of the four failures noted above would have triggered [] however, all appeared on the first chirp, indicating they occurred simultaneously or in very rapid sequence. Since the DC generator should function until RPM approaches 35 per cent, it appears that engine rundown may have been rapid. This could occur with engine seizure or disintegration. Teardown and inspection of the engine by the Board of Investigation should assist in determining the exact cause of failure.

5. At 0642Z Okinawa lost radar contact with the aircraft at a point approximately 165 NM from Naha Air Base (see attached map) and apparently did not thereafter regain contact. Although the aircraft IFF ceased to operate after 0638Z, thus reducing the capability of the radars

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to paint the aircraft, no logical explanation has yet been provided as to why the radars were unable to skin-paint the aircraft during the approximately twenty minutes the aircraft was approaching Naha. It appears that the pilot attempted a power off landing on Okinawa and that he had full control of the aircraft until he ejected.

6. Eye witnesses state that the aircraft approached the point of impact (Kerama Island) from the west and that it was "very quiet" (aircraft was without power). At approximately 300 feet altitude the pilot was observed to eject through the canopy of the aircraft. His chute partially deployed and then wrapped around his body. He impacted the water in this condition. Local fisherman recovered the body and a USAF helicopter removed it to Naha AB, Okinawa.

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[redacted]

8. After the pilot ejected, the aircraft spiralled slightly to the right, struck the water and broke up very near the shoreline of Kerama Island. Recovery of the wreckage is being accomplished by a US Army tug under control of the 313th Air Division, Okinawa. Wreckage will be moved from Naha Navy Pier to the secure end of Naha AB and then transported to [redacted] via USAF C-124, probably not before this weekend.

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9. An Accident Investigation Board has been convened and is scheduled to arrive [redacted] on June 25. We expect that approximately two weeks will be required to complete the investigation. U-2 aircraft at [redacted] have been grounded until the investigation has been completed and corrective actions, if any, accomplished. Based on past experience, it can be assumed that [redacted] will require at least two additional weeks for refresher training and restoration of pilot confidence in the aircraft prior to resumption of operational activities (approximately 1 August 1966).

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10. Loss of Article 384 reduces the Agency/SAC inventory to sixteen U-2 aircraft. SAC now has ten aircraft, two of which are at Lockheed undergoing conversion to the J-75 configuration, and not available for operational activities. CIA now has six U-2 aircraft of which five are operationally ready. Their locations and status are listed as follows:

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<u>Aircraft</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Status</u>
[redacted]		
348	Edwards AFB	Operationally Ready
349	Edwards AFB	Operationally Ready
381	Edwards AFB	Operationally Ready
359	Lockheed	Out of Commission

Article 359 is being modified to accept Systems 20 and 22 and will be used for the operational testing of those systems, now scheduled for late July 1966.

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11. [redacted] are operationally ready in the TACKLE U-2 aircraft with a total of ten missions left in their combat tour. Two other pilots have completed their U-2 training at [redacted] and are scheduled to begin training in the J-75 configured U-2 on 5 July 1966. In order to speed up their type conversion, we are considering completing their training at Edwards AFB in our unit there. It is anticipated that they will be operationally ready between 15 August and 1 September 1966.

Attachment:

Map
Addendum

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DD/OSA/JA Cunningham, Jr:dbt (5684 - 23 June 1966)

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- #10-ID/OSA
- #11-IDEA/OSA

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